

English and American Modernism

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MODERNISTS are a type of "After-Christians," people whose mind is barred to the approach of faith by the conviction that they have passed beyond its credulity into a purer, higher, and more rational realm of truth. They claim to be Christians of an esoteric Christianity. They assert that they keep the kernel of revealed truth, while rejecting that husk of myth, superstition, mystery, and miracle which, they say, envelops the nucleus of genuine Christianity in the minds of Catholics and other credulous traditionalists.

Modernist mentality is the very antithesis of that childlike, but by no means childish, docility to which Christ pointed as an essential condition of entering the Kingdom of God. It utterly rejects the method of faith; it distrusts all teaching authority, repudiates all *magisterium*, and in rejecting this, it turns its back on God's own plan for the communication of His religious truth to men.

If no attempt is made here to give a scientific definition of Modernism it is because, as the paper develops, the detailed negation of Catholic truth, the attitude towards the Creeds and the supernatural order, will convey, better than any abstract definition, a clear notion of this resurrection of all the ancient heresies which masquerades as something new and up-to-date. It will be seen that Modernism is not even modern. If its conclusions are those of the rationalists, its methods are not rational.

The writer was present at the annual Conference of English Modernists at Oxford in August, 1926, where some members of the Modern Churchman's Union met to listen to papers dealing with the subjects which are treated in Catholic books of natural theology. He listened to discussions on such topics as "Why we believe in God," and "What we believe about God," without hearing any allusion

to those marvelous proofs which the master mind of Aquinas approved and developed in establishing the philosophic truth of Theism.

"EXPERIENCE" THEIR SOLE CRITERION

The scholastic arguments were not criticized; they were entirely ignored. To the Modernist lecturers, the sole and the final appeal was to religious "experience." The resulting assent never seemed to transcend probability, and the pragmatic proof that belief in God "works" was all that we were offered in exchange for the certain conclusions of reason, our highest natural faculty for attaining to rational conviction. Dean Inge describes the soul's journey as a venture towards belief: one makes an "experiment" in accepting a religious truth as an hypothesis, and the "experiment" results in an "experience."

With regard to the nature of the Supreme Being, at the Oxford Conference God was represented as being neither truly omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor omnipresent; for, obviously, these Divine attributes cannot enter directly into our religious "experience" and assert themselves with the irresistible clarity with which light strikes on the eye of man and forces our assent to its reality. God's attributes can be established by reason, they are known to faith, but they must remain outside the *experience* of those who have not yet *seen* God.

It was strange to hear those who accuse Catholics of credulity, making religious experience the basis of their belief, seeing that all through religious history this has been the source of the wildest superstitions. It is sufficient to mention the names of Joseph P. Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and Mrs. Eddy, the foundress of Christian Science in America, and Johanna Southcote in England.

Prof. Kirsopp Lake, of Harvard, who was present at the Oxford Conference, frankly admitted the risk that was being run in thus setting aside the old rational proofs concerning God's existence and His nature. His final words were particularly suggestive. He said:

I am well aware that to take religious experience as the basis of a sound theology is extraordinarily dangerous. I do not live in America without fully appreciating the danger referred to, arising from the growth of a new orthodoxy, a psychological orthodoxy. . . . It is true that there is a school of psychology which is telling us

that religious experience is merely a subjective reaction which has no ultimate significance for any of us: it is merely a kind of thrill.

Prof. Kirsopp Lake does not accept the conclusions of this "new psychology"—he controverts it; but it is there, already, with its new message for the twentieth century. The new psychology speaks with the confident voice of youth; and because of its self-assurance and its claim to be the latest science, it will win acceptance in spite of its being as unreasonable as the ravings of Mrs. Eddy in her gospel of Christian Science.

THE "SUPERNATURAL" OF MODERNISTS

English Modernists are usually quite reverent—almost evangelical in tone. They are anxious not to shock their readers. They prefer to keep as much as possible the old terms and to invest them with a new meaning. In this lies the chief danger of their attack on Christianity. The *Church Times*, the organ of the "Anglo-Catholic" party, notes that "The genuine Modernist is a very dangerous person, because he expresses himself in terms of the most unimpeachable orthodoxy." This is hardly true, as we shall see in the course of this paper, but the Modernist does prefer to wrap up his heresy or blasphemy in words which will shock as little as possible, and he certainly uses familiar, consecrated words in an entirely new sense. Thus he accompanies his denial of the miraculous with the reassuring statement that he clings to the supernatural.

With regard to the supernatural, let us note here how the Modernist keeps the word, but evacuates it of its traditional theological meaning. The Rev. J. W. Thompson, an Oxford Modernist, says:

To reject miracles is not to reject the supernatural. Indeed this is the only condition upon which science and supernaturalism can survive side by side . . . It makes it possible to retain the essence of belief in the supernatural in the only form in which educated thought can long retain it, that is without belief in the miraculous.

The leading English Modernist, Rev. H. Major, D.D., said at the Oxford Conference (1921): "The Modernist believes in the supernatural, but it is a non-miraculous supernatural . . . the Modernist believes in a perfectly human, non-miraculous Christ."

In the 1924 Oxford Conference, the Rev. J. C. Hardwick more clearly defines the pseudo-supernaturalism of Modernism. He says:

If we choose the term *supernatural* to describe the higher qualities of existence, *such as life and mind*, there is nothing to prevent our doing so . . . but the enrichment of nature by scientific discoveries is rendering the concept of the supernatural redundant. It will tend by a natural and almost unnoticeable movement of thought to disappear . . . We need to disencumber our religion of this *incubus of the supernatural*—or rather of the dualism of the natural and supernatural.

Nowhere do Modernists accept the Catholic doctrine of grace and the supernatural order. In retaining the "supernatural," Modernists are merely asserting their belief in life and spirit. They have recoiled from the gross materialism of the last century and are quite ready to recognize the spirituality of man's soul, and an Immanent Divine Spirit in creation. This is for them the only "supernatural" which they are prepared to admit. Sanctifying grace and all it involves in Catholic theology is non-existent for the Modernist. In his eyes, all human beings are Sons of God by the fact of their creation. The "Fatherhood of God" is of the essence of His "Creator-hood." Instead of a "fall of man" in Adam, Modernists agree with evolutionists in proclaiming the rise of man from the bestial state to human dignity. Original sin, for them, is but the survival of animal instincts in men who have climbed to a higher level than those ape ancestors from which they are sprung. The *fomes peccati* is for the Modernist the essence of "original sin." Their denial of any basis of fact for the earlier chapters of Genesis naturally results in the rejection of St. Paul's doctrine of our racial fall in Adam.

MODERNIST CHRISTOLOGY

Let us now turn to Modernist Christology, and before taking in detail its conclusions about Christ, let us briefly describe the "critical" methods which have led to these conclusions. The fundamental principle is that all the miraculous elements in the Gospels must be either excised or given a natural explanation.

Perhaps a simple illustration will help to elucidate the process of Modernist criticism of the New Testament which results in its rejection of the doctrines defined at Nicea.

My readers are probably familiar with the jig-saw puzzles, which a few years ago amused leisured folk, as do cross-word puzzles today. In the jig-saw, a large picture is pasted on to a piece of thin wood and then, by means of a fret saw,

the wood is cut into a large number of irregularly shaped small pieces. These pieces are shaken up in a box, and the puzzle is to reconstruct the whole picture by fitting together all the detached bits. The whole New Testament may be assimilated to a box filled with a vast number of passages—texts, single words, phrases—which speak of Christ.

When the Catholic Church, in its Creeds and theology, gives us its full message about Our Lord, it has fitted into one perfect, complex picture, *all* the parts which are found scattered throughout the New Testament. Nothing is set aside. The Gospels are not, as it were, expurgated or mutilated. The resulting picture has the Divine harmony of truth. There is no inconsistency, no irreconcilable conflict between one partial truth and another. The Divine mystery of the Incarnation remains, as it must remain, a mystery: but while the mystery is above reason, it is nowhere in conflict with reason. Thus does the Catholic Church present the solution of the Synoptic problem in its theology of the Incarnation.

Modernists set about their reconstruction of Christ in a different way. The miraculous is first set aside as irrelevant to the true picture of the "historic Christ"—the "perfectly human, non-miraculous Christ" of the English Modernist Congress of 1921. They collect from the Scriptures all those texts which reveal the *humanity* of Christ. Passages which express that "emptying of Himself" to which the Son of God submitted in taking human nature, are for them the only portions that combine to make up the authentic "Christ of history."

The other portions, the miracles to which no naturalistic explanation can be applied with any plausibility, the utterances of Christ which claim Divine knowledge and power and pre-existence, are placed apart, and the final solution they offer is that we have at least three separate pictures, the "bits" of which have been mixed up in one New Testament. They carefully separate their three pictures of Christ: first, the "perfectly human, non-miraculous Christ" of actual "fact" or history; second, the Christ transformed by the mind of St. Paul, and preached to his converts; third, the pre-existent *Logos* Christ of the "unknown philosopher" of Ephesus, whose Gospel was unaccountably attributed to the Apostle St. John by the early Church, and accepted as such by the Catholic Church of the centuries.

Here we have the critical process of Modernism: let us look at its results.

THE CHRIST OF MODERNISM

What is the Modernist teaching about Our Lord? Who is Jesus Christ? When we say "who," we are asking for an account of His personality. The answer of the Catholic Church and of the Creeds is clear. He is the Only-Begotten Eternal Son of God, equal to the Father in His Divine personality. He has a human nature, hypostatically united to that Divine personality, but He has no human personality. Christ is a single person—not two persons intimately associated. Modernism agrees that He has a single personality—but declares that His is a *purely human* personality—Christ is not God.

A professor of divinity at the Cambridge Girton Conference of English Modernists in 1921, declared frankly:

"We must absolutely jettison the traditional doctrine that His personality was not human but divine." He adds: "I do not for a moment suppose that Jesus ever thought of Himself as God."

Dean Rashdall said: "Jesus did not claim Divinity for Himself." Prof. Kirsopp Lake, the leading Modernist mind of America—once an Anglican parson—agrees: "Jesus never claimed to be Divine at all"; and goes on to emphasize his statement in these words: "The central doctrine of Catholic theology was unknown to Jesus and to those disciples of Jesus who first recorded His life." The same Professor Lake, speaking of the faith of the Modernist "Church of the Future," says that that Church "will not require as a condition of membership that we should accept any opinion about Jesus, not even His own"!

The Modernists, then, will not call Christ God, or adore Him as such. If they allow the adjective *divine* to be applied to Him, it is only in an improper, metaphorical sense—in the sense in which it is sometimes applied to mere men and women. A lecturer at the Cambridge Conference of 1921 said:

That we are justified in thinking of God as like Christ, that the character and teaching of Christ contains the fullest disclosure both of the character of God Himself and of His will for man, that is (so far as so momentous a truth can be summed up in a few words) the true meaning to us of the doctrine of Christ's divinity.

But all this could be said of any mere man of the highest moral character, whom the Holy Spirit might elect and inspire with a message for mankind. It would not involve an Incarnation.

Take, again, the statements of Doctor Major, the leader of present-day English Modernism. He writes:

The Deity of Jesus was seen in His perfect humanity. There is not a vast gulf between the Divine nature and human nature. . . . It is this conviction of the close relationship of Deity and humanity, which alone makes the Incarnation credible to the modern man. Jesus reveals this relationship, and He also renders possible the attainment of the ideal of Divine sonship by every man. We human beings have the ineffable and incomprehensible privilege of being potentially Sons of God. . . .

Here he says what the Unitarian Martineau had already said: "The Incarnation is not true of Christ exclusively, but of man universally."

Doctor Major tells us what he believes Our Lord's own claim to be:

Let it be clearly realized that Jesus Himself did not claim to be the Son of God in a metaphysical sense such as is required by Nicene theology (i. e., the Creeds). *He claimed to be God's Son in a moral sense, in the sense in which all human beings are Sons of God: i. e., as standing in a filial and moral relationship to God, and as capable of acting on those moral principles on which God acts.*

It is not surprising, with these theories of the personality of Christ, that Modernists should deny Him Divine power and knowledge. Dean Rashdall says:

The Divinity of Christ does not imply Omniscience. There is no more reason for supposing that Jesus of Nazareth knew more than His contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of mental diseases which current belief attributed to diabolic possession, than He knew more about the authorship of the Psalms and the Pentateuch. . . . [Again]: Our Lord entertained some expectations about the future which history has not verified.

Modernists use Christ's alleged ignorance of the future as a principle of their criticism, and, after stating that Jesus believed that the end of the age was close at hand, they cut out of the Gospels, *on that sole ground*, any words of His which refer to the founding of a Church, the preaching the Gospel to the whole world, Baptism and the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist.

They say that He *cannot* have spoken of these things, for He believed the end of the world was due to happen before they could possibly be realized! Hence Doctor Major, in the Oxford Conference of 1925, said that Christ would

have been much surprised had He been told that His disciples would set to work to baptize and gather their followers into a Church; and Bishop Barnes of Birmingham declared at the same meeting, that Christ, at the last Supper, would have been surprised had He been told that the "farewell meal" with His friends would become a Sacrament and Sacrifice in a Church which He never had any idea of founding! Thus does Modernism construct its theology!

This Modernist idea of the ignorance of Christ has its bearing on the authority to be attached to His moral teaching.

Prof. Kirsopp Lake says: "The religion of tomorrow will assuredly have much to say as to conduct; but it will have to work out its own problems in its own way, not by trying to find a short cut to their solution in the teaching of Jesus or anyone else."

MODERNISTS AND THE CREED

Let us turn now to the attitude of Modernists towards the Creeds, which they are still obliged, as Anglican clergymen, to recite in the worship of their Church. Obviously they do not believe in all the articles of the Creeds.

To a Modernist, the Creeds are in no way an expression of his sincere and genuine belief, as they are to us Catholics. If he could retain them in worship, it would not be because of their truth, but for sentimental reasons. These ruins of a former faith are to be kept for the present solely for their traditional or historic interest. They are believed to have lost their original use, as have the ruined abbeys of England or the Forum in Rome. The recital of a Creed in the liturgy is, for an extreme Modernist clergyman like Dean Inge, but the formal password which gives him admission to the pulpit of the church or cathedral. Once there he preaches the denial of the same articles which he has just affirmed at the altar. The fabric of revealed religion is believed by Modernists to have cracked and crumbled in the destroying atmosphere of modern scientific thought. Criticism is alleged to have corroded the contents of the Creed of Christendom. And so, in the pulpit the Modernist preacher gives what he calls a "re-statement" or a "re-interpretation" of the Creed; but his "re-statement" is a plain denial, his "re-interpretation" so glaring a misinterpretation

of the Creed he has just solemnly recited as to bear no relation of similarity to the original sense.

To say that Christ was born in the same manner as other children of men, and that after death His Body corrupted in the tomb—as nearly all Modernists say is to *deny*, not to “re-state” or “re-interpret” the words “born of the Virgin Mary”; “the third day He rose again from the dead.”

In the Cambridge Modernist Conference of 1921, in a paper on “The Uses of a Creed,” we are told:

There is no one, and certainly no member of this Conference, who could accept the Nicene or Apostles’ Creed literally and completely in the sense intended by those who formed those Creeds. A Creed, when accepted by any branch of the Church, must not imply that every member of it accepts in a literal sense every article of the Creed: it must express a *general loyalty* to the Church and its Divine Head, and a recognition of general unity in fundamental belief.

It is difficult for us to see what is left in the way of “fundamental Christian belief” when Modernists have finished their “re-statement” of the Faith!

A leading American Modernist, Dr. Leighton Parks, says: “The Modernist with a free conscience rejoices to recite the old formularies and bear witness to the unity of the faith which is the same ‘yesterday, today and for ever,’ though the intellectual concepts involved in the ancient words change from age to age.”

What a strange idea! The faith is the same, but the beliefs change from age to age! The Modernist motto seems to be “Keep the old words but change their meaning!”

INTERPRETING BY DENYING

Again Doctor Parks says: “The Modernist repeats the ancient words *ex animo*, but interprets every article in accordance with the intellectual atmosphere he is breathing.” As his “intellectual atmosphere” is one in which miracles and the supernatural do not exist, he affirms the Virgin Birth and Resurrection in the ancient words, and interprets the words by supplying from his “intellectual atmosphere” the word *not*!—*not* born of the Virgin, *not* risen on the third day. Such juggling with words is not interpretation but denial.

An American Bishop, Doctor Lawrence of Massachusetts, with a subtlety of mental reservation and duplicity

which ill-informed Protestant bigotry would declare to be the peculiar possession of Jesuit casuistry, gives this advice to Modernist clergymen who disbelieve in the miracle of the Virgin Birth, and find themselves confronted with the duty of solemnly affirming belief in that mystery, when reciting the Creed in the ritual. Bishop Lawrence writes:

There are, as we know, clergymen, a number of them, who find it difficult, if not impossible, to accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Inasmuch as the Creeds stand for the essentials of the faith, and as belief in the Virgin Birth is not to them an essential, I am clear that *with an honest heart* they may join in the recital of the Creeds.

There is no reason why the same principle might not be extended to disbelief in the Divinity of Christ, His bodily Resurrection on Easter Sunday, and the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. A Modernist who disbelieves these doctrines—as is the case with an increasing number of Protestant clergymen—might decide that they *cannot* be essentials of the Faith, for he believes them to be untrue; and so, “with an honest heart,” he says *Credo*, when he means *nego!* Might not a Unitarian or even a Jew or Mohammedan recite the Christian Creeds “*ex animo*,” according to the advice of Bishop Lawrence, making the mental reservations appropriate to their particular unbeliefs?

Prof. Kirsopp Lake seems to prefer a more straightforward attitude towards the use of Creeds. At least he says: “I have myself sometimes wondered whether it would not be simpler to say that the Creed is wrong and cease affirming it.”

It is obvious how dangerous to Christianity in England and America is this attitude of the Modernist clergy. No profession of faith would suffice to bar their entry into the Protestant ministry. They speak from the old pre-reformation pulpits in what were once the Catholic cathedrals of England and teach the very heresies that were condemned in the first ages of the Church, asserting that they are merely “re-interpreting” or “re-stating” in twentieth-century language and thoughts the faith of the Catholic Church.

At the end of the Modernist Congress at Oxford, in August, 1925, on the invitation of the members, the present writer was able to address the Congress, and express to them in plain language what he, a Jesuit, thought of their honesty and veracity in this matter. His last words before leaving the rostrum were:

Had the Jesuit martyr, Edmund Campion, known, and had his conscience been able to approve your methods, gentlemen, he could have taken the oath of Royal Supremacy glibly, as you recite the Creed, and with a mental reservation. He could have saved his life by such duplicity, but he preferred to die at Tyburn, and Campion Hall stands near us in Oxford today as a memorial to his glorious martyrdom for Catholic truth.

The Modernist notion of the miraculous will be the subject of a later paper.

Living Stones

REV. C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

A sermon delivered at Brisbane, Australia, at the laying of the cornerstone of the new cathedral, September 16, 1928.

For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus (1 Cor., iii, 11).

EVERY thought today is subordinate to the fact that this afternoon the foundation stone of a new cathedral, planned by your Archbishop, will be laid by the Legate of His Holiness the Pope. It will be called the Cathedral of the Holy Name. Any man may well desire his own name to be respected. No one of you would allow the name of his friend, or of anyone whom he loved, to be bandied about or treated with disrespect. You do homage to the name of your city; and each of us whole-heartedly reveres the name of his country. But "there is no other Name given under heaven among men, whereby you may be saved, except that of Jesus Christ Our Lord."

Therefore, massive as must be the foundations of your new cathedral; mighty as will be the pillars that uphold it, vast as shall be the cupola that crowns it, and shall detach itself against your exquisite Queensland sky, yet even above the dome will stand the cross.

THE CROSS

The cross, that was once the very symbol of a slave's and a felon's execution, whose very name was a curse, has been changed into something so honorable that no king nor Government but fashions the highest mark of respect in

its shape. In your childhood, the cross was traced upon your foreheads, and smote itself into your souls; you cannot be un-crossed. You hope that it may be re-signed upon your dying senses; you pray that it may stand above your grave. All this for the sake of the Crucified, of Christ, who died upon it, and altered its meaning for ever.

Therefore, the Cathedral is to be built in the Name, and to the Name of Him to whom every knee should kneel, whom the highest archangel and seraph must adore even as we do. But a cathedral is a mother-church. Therefore, when I think of this new building, I think of all those churches that shall be its daughters, and those priests who shall be ordained within it. And I pray that in Brisbane and in Queensland vocations to the priesthood may be many, and may be lived out to the full. And here, more somehow than in New South Wales, I have found myself thinking about enormous territories, and, in consequence, of lonely priests, little isolated groups of nuns, loyal communities of lay folk, living the Catholic life under great difficulties, and all of them children of your Metropolitan.

SANCTITY OF MARRIED LIFE

So touched have I been by the thought of these distant parishes, that daily have I prayed at Mass for them, their clergy, their schools and teachers, for their little children—and yesterday proved how dearly these love and are loved by their Archbishop;—for their young men and boys, that they may weather the storms of adolescence, and prove themselves indeed to be Christian men; for their girls who are growing up towards the incomparable dignity of Catholic motherhood, and for the sanctity of married life among you. May the Catholic Church in all the dioceses of Queensland develop triumphantly throughout itself, and in union always with this its center.

But there are here prelates from other Australian cities along with your own beloved and statesmanlike chief pastor. Just in proportion as Australia as a whole is a great country, and is destined to be greater still, and even in order that it may become fully great, we have to pray today that the Lord's House, that kind of super-Cathedral which stands for the Catholic Church in the land as a whole, may be firm-founded and bravely built. A house close-knit in all

its parts, without chink or crevice in its walls, a house of human hearts in true unity, a living house of souls whose true new name is Christ's.

A GROWING HORIZON

As you have here the Cardinal Legate, who represents in his person the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Roman Pontiff, who is Christ's Viceroy in this part of His Church still planted upon earth, your horizon grows and grows. Not one city only, nor one State alone; not one land alone, be it never so dear: but that universal, supernational Church is imaged to you this day which is the creation of Jesus Christ, sole universal King and Lord of all of us. In Christ, says St. Paul, there is no more Jew nor Gentile, nor cultured nor barbarian, nay, nor male nor female, for "in Him" all we are become "one thing."

Brethren, you see before your eyes the growth of the Body of Christ. He has not yet, as St. Paul once more with audacious realism cries, reached "the full stature of His maturity." Soul by soul, parish by parish, diocese by diocese, the Catholic Church both is and creates the Body of Our Lord, who is "fully fulfilling Himself in all things." Within that Body may we never cause the schism of uncharity, pierce the wound of disunion. Communion is the very law of its being. All the little children of all the Catholic world, all the young men, fighting their battle against self, all young girls growing up in the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, their Queen and Mother; all those Christian men who worked as Christ Himself, a working-man, once toiled; all those families that seek to model themselves upon the one Most Holy Family, all these are "in communion" with you today, and you with them. Charity, unity, and peace are taught to you by the very existence of that Church which is the "Mother of us all."

THE LIVING EDIFICE OF GOD

In Christ then and His Name, and only so, shall you grow up as He would have you be—one Bread of many grains, one Vine that fills one Chalice of Salvation with many drops—many, yet all alike to be transubstantiated into One Saving Blood. Of you it must be said that you

are each of you a living stone in your part of the living edifice, wherein of your chief pastor it may be truly affirmed, as St. John says, that Christ will make him to be a "pillar in the House of God, and thereout shall he go never;" and you will build thus not only one cathedral, nor one spiritual unit, even, within city or State or land or race; but that City of God that has no need of lamp to give it light, because God is the Light thereof, and Jesus Christ.

Some Mysteries of Population

DR. HALLIDAY SUTHERLAND

Population was discussed last November in Paris by the committee of experts appointed by the Catholic Union of International Relations. In this article, reprinted from the London "Universe" of November 30 and December 7, 1928, Doctor Sutherland outlines some of the mysteries of population, and deals with practical problems confronting most civilized nations today.

GEOLOGISTS believe that men were on the earth one hundred and fifty thousand years ago. Neo-Malthusians believe "that population, when unchecked, goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years." Then come statisticians, who estimate the present population of the world at eighteen thousand millions.

Now, whatever be the truth, it is obvious that one or other of these assumptions must be false. At one time there were only two people on earth, and if we double 2 thirty-three times, 2, 4, 8, 16, and so on—we reach a figure of over seventeen thousand millions. Therefore, if the sole tendency of population was to increase, we must conclude that population has doubled on an average once every four and a half thousand years, which is absurd.

The professors must fight out their own nightmare, whilst we study its causation. We are all apt to think, say, because the population of England did increase during the nineteenth century, that therefore all populations in the past and future did and must likewise increase. We forget that the word *increase* implies at least the possibility of decrease, and that one may be as natural as the other.

Such a thought is regarded by the modern mind as sheer superstition, as witness Dean Inge, who remarks that "Miracle requires two gods, one to suspend the laws of the other." Simpler minds may think that what the One God has created that also He has power to destroy—although, to be just to the Dean, the sentence quoted is not one of his best efforts. If he ignored the word *miracle*, which he detests, the Dean, as a thinking man, would realize that what Omnipotence has created the same Omnipotence can suspend or destroy as He wills, and through laws none the less natural although to us incomprehensible.

CONSTANT INCREASE NOT ASSURED

Science does not warrant the assumption that population has shown or will show an inevitable increase. On the contrary, geologists have proved that on every continent, long before recorded history, there existed vast civilizations now dead, buried and forgotten, once our equals and sometimes our superiors in knowledge. Thus in the British Museum are statuettes of women in the pre-Grecian civilization of Crete (*circa* 2000 B. C.), whose language is still undeciphered, but who were dressed as are today the women of London, Paris, and New York.

Most recently there comes the German archeologist, Frobenius, to tell us that under the great Zimbabwe ruins of Rhodesia he has discovered the existence of a civilized race who mined gold, copper, and tin. "These long-dead people not only had enormous knowledge of geology, but possessed technical mining skill whereof even we today are ignorant."

When time is measured in eons, the fall of Babylon, the decline of Greece, the sack of Jerusalem, the partition of the Roman Empire, and the decay of Islam, are mere events of yester-year; because, in the golden words of Henry George, "Behind dim empires, vaguer ghosts of empires loom."

It is difficult to visualize this long march of humanity. We may think of an army now eighteen thousand million strong, in which, when one unit falls, his place is instantly taken by another. There were times when our army was smaller—when cave men lived in a lonely, dangerous world across which prehistoric monsters roamed. Of the cave

man I know as little as the professors, but of the man who drew pictures on the walls of his cave to educate his children, who made the primordial discovery of fire, and for whom a wolf left the pack to become a dog, of that man I say—he was no ape.

Or, again, population is a river of life flowing over the earth in great waves, of which the crest is never too high nor the trough too low. The river is composed of millions of particles, each a human being. It is as though every particle of water in the Rhone became conscious and visible at the moment of leaving the Lake of Geneva, and remained visible until the Rhone disappears into the earth a few miles away. The particles would not know of themselves whence they came or whither they were going. But during their brief journey they could choose, within limits, their place in the stream, alter for better or worse the particles around them, and make observations on the size and speed of their river.

Thus do we men and women make observations on the earth, and pause to tell the children following swiftly in our wake. They, in turn, will pass back their knowledge to generations yet unborn. It is a mysterious river, because, when you in the river come to think of it, the past is in front of us and the future generations are behind.

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES IN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

When the Committee of the Catholic Council for International Relations resumes next March its discussion of problems of population—the subject of its recent meeting in Paris—M. Vieuille, of Paris, will define the thesis that a general acceptance of Christian principles would solve or ameliorate the social problems of Europe, as affecting Catholic workmen, employers, and nations; and Professor Gorski, of Poland, will speak on density of population as a factor to be considered by nations in their political and economic relations.

These are difficult and delicate problems, involving a study of certain sovereign rights, which in the past have led to wars.

To what extent has a nation the right to exclude aliens? To what extent has a nation the right to conserve undeveloped territory against a flow of population from more

densely populated countries? These are great problems, and the small committee, seeking a solution, consists of representatives of Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Poland, Holland, and Belgium.

But despite obvious difficulties, those who met in Paris recognized amongst themselves one common bond of union which makes for peace amongst classes as amongst nations—the Catholic Faith. In due course the conclusions of the Paris committee will go to the international executive at Fribourg (Switzerland), whence they will be forwarded for publication to the affiliated societies in each country.

In the meantime, problems of population are affecting Great Britain and the British nations overseas. Here at home our cities are overcrowded and the countryside is under-populated. In the heyday of industrial prosperity the change was unnoticed, or, if noted, was acclaimed. Our industrial supremacy has now been challenged, and in times of unemployment our cities are dangerous, for the simple reason that they cannot feed themselves. Ever since the Reformation, the land of England has been passing out of the ownership of the people. By the year 1874 two-thirds of England was owned by fewer than 11,000 landlords.

THE BASE OF THE PYRAMID

We are now reaping the consequences of a definite policy, against which a warning was given as long ago as 1891 by the late Mr. Kay, Q.C.:

We have been cutting away the base of our social pyramid, whilst nearly all other civilized countries have been pursuing an exactly opposite policy. In France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium, and Italy, feudalism has been suppressed, and in all these countries small estates long since began to multiply. Here, not only are they decreasing, but the very class of yeoman is all but extinguished.

Of the remedies proposed for these ills, some are worse than the disease. To cure our overcrowded cities Dean Inge would introduce compulsory restriction of families. The folly of that suggestion is apparent when we remember that of all male workers over twenty years of age in England only ten per cent have more than three children under fourteen years of age. Restriction is no solution, as the Dean has already discovered.

He deplores alike the rise of the Irish and the decline of the Scottish race in Scotland. The latter have to some

extent deserted the moral standards that once made Protestant Scotland great, whereas the Irish adhere to the teaching of the older Faith that once was the Faith of Scotland.

In face of these perplexities, the Dean is, if I may say so without being called a "guttersnipe of the press," flummoxed and dumbfounded, because he now demands that the thrifty Scot should be protected against the Irish. As a Scotsman I cannot thank him. If any nation chooses to enter on the path of national decline, no power on earth can prevent their country from passing into the possession of some more virile and adventurous race. One is minded of that terrible line in Æschylus: "When a man is bent on ruin, God will help him on his way."

The British nations overseas have their own problems of population, and these are the reverse of ours. Thus only four years ago Mr. M. H. Ellis made the first motor-car journey across the continent of Australia to explore its northern territory, an area of 523,000 square miles, which, although first settled in 1828, carries today fewer than 3,000 white inhabitants. In this northern territory is the Barkley Tableland, equal in area to Great Britain. This tract of land is divided into twelve stations, the largest of which is the size of Belgium, "and which carries fewer than 40,000 head of cattle and a white population which does not run to more than a dozen."

These facts are almost incredible. But the country is no El Dorado: "It will feed one sheep on four acres, and is excellent cattle country," *provided* millions are available "for water supply, a port on the McArthur River, stocking, and the protection of stock against pest and drought." Then why not float a British loan? Mr. Ellis answers: "Being a democratic people, well protected by a benign British Admiralty, we Australians are nurtured in the idea that millions are a curse even when they mean high wages, added wealth, and swifter growth."

"We Don't Want Children"

Reprinted from the Perth "Record"

THIS slogan of modern married life is only an echo of the dearth of welcome that greeted the Child of Bethlehem on His arrival among men. Amongst the many sentiments that are begotten of meditation on the birth of Christ, there is one chilling thought which mars the beauty of the scene, and it is that "there was no room for Him in the inn." Though His mother had kept her secret well guarded; though no one was aware of her precious burden of Divinity, yet, one would expect that her condition of expectancy would have won for her the consideration of the crowded inn. But it was not to be. In the unthinkable circumstances in which she was placed, were it not for the conserving hand of God, that childbirth would have been attended with tragic consequences. It is not the lot of even the poorest mother to give birth to her child as a guest of the beasts of the field. The biting December wind was not as cold as the unsympathetic attitude of the world to her who was pregnant with the Divine. But Jesus the Child escaped the consequences of inconsideration at His birth by a miracle of preservation wrought by God. He escaped, also, the ravages of the sword of the tyrant who spilled on the earth the blood of Innocents in the hope of thereby doing the King of the Jews to death. We may say that Mary caught up in her own heart the dagger that was aimed at her Child's existence from the moment of His conception,—*"and thine own soul a sword shall pierce."*

Is it not a terrible fact that at the present day there is less welcome for the baby than there was even for the unwelcome Christ Child? Is it not a dreadful reflection on the lost sense of family responsibility, that married people sometimes are no longer thrilled by that greatest of all human joys,—the possessing of a tiny form in whose veins courses their own life blood? What has become of the pristine chivalry of men, and the time-honored sense of maternity in women? "We don't want children" is the ruling principle of modern domestic life. The encumbrance of them, the loss of time, the temporary cessation of social engagements which the noble art of motherhood demands, are excuses sufficient

to render the fittest in the land voluntarily barren. The imagined over-cost of support of a God-willed family is the pet theory of the childless ones. Do they forget that there is a God who wills the existence of His beings, and of whom He has made the parents the instruments of their lives? "We don't want children" savors of the old "I will not serve."

The ungodly attitude of many modern married people towards children is in itself a thing to be deplored, and to cause us to fear for the future generation. But the most awful feature of this criminal disposition is the length these people are going in the ways of iniquity to bring about the desired result. What a dreadful thought it is to reflect on the numerous baby slaughter-houses in our midst, where the lucrative business of killing the unborn children is carried on. Judges and juries are requisitioned to rid us of the murderer, but what of the paid professional murderers of the developing child, who by virtue of the fell work and its secret, can name their own price? Their action is none the less blameable on account of the fact that the child is yet unborn. They are murderers under the law, and deserve the murderer's fate. It is a regrettable thing so few of the offenders are brought to justice. If the public only knew how many of these houses of convenience exist in the community, there would long since have been a frenzied demand to have this brood of vipers stamped out.